

Frequently Asked Questions: Electronic Deer and Bear Registration

June 1, 2015

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Implementation

- When will full implementation of electronic registration occur?
Electronic registration is being fully implemented during the 2015 big game seasons. This means the use of phone, internet and in-person registration will be available to all hunters this fall.
- Is registering a deer/bear now optional, or still mandatory?
Registering a deer or bear is still mandatory, and is the responsibility of the individual hunter.
- We tested e-reg during the 2014 season. What were the outcomes?
Approximately 14,000 hunters (200/county) were provided with the ability to electronically register their deer. Over 10,000 deer were registered. Following the season, we sent a survey out to 3000 of the hunters who registered a deer electronically asking them for feedback that could be used to improve the system. We used their feedback to make several modifications that included fewer voice commands and a shorter 10-digit confirmation number.
- What is the incentive for registering deer electronically rather than in person?
Convenience is the best incentive. Registering electronically is fast and saves hunters time. Many hunters will also see cost savings by not having to drive to a registration station and deer can be immediately registered and processed, especially in warm weather. This registration method will also provide better, faster access to data and save the department money that can be redirected back to other programs.
- Have other states that have implemented electronic registration experienced any reluctance from hunters?
At first, yes, but not to any great degree. After the initial launch, Minnesota DNR experienced some reluctance from their hunters. However, after hunters realized the convenience of the system, yet saw that it maintained their ability to visit in-person registration stations to view harvested deer and hold deer contests, etc. they were very accepting of the system. Minnesota DNR staff also had great reservations about electronic registration, but asserted that their hunters and staff would not want to go back to the previous method of paper registration that we currently use.
- How will the registration of ag damage deer be handled using electronic registration?
Until August of 2015, ag damage participants will continue to call the DNR call center to register a deer/bear. After that, they will use the same registration system and methods as other hunters.

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Methods

- How would registering a deer/bear by telephone work?
Similar to the current system used for turkeys, geese and other species, the successful hunter would call in to a toll-free number (1-844-GAME-REG). The hunter would then be asked a short list of questions which would only take a few minutes. The information the hunter provides will then be loaded to the system and available for department use.
- How would registering a deer/bear by internet work?
The successful hunter or registration station would go to gamereg.wi.gov and answer a short list of questions. The process takes less than two minutes.
- Will there be a smartphone app or link in the Pocket Ranger[®] app that takes hunters directly to the e-registration site?
Yes. The Pocket Ranger[®] app will include a link to the e-registration system, which will take users directly to the online e-registration site, the call-in number or a searchable list of walk-in registration stations.
- Would we expect all options to get an equal amount of use?
Referring to information recently provided to the department by the Minnesota DNR: in 2013, about 41% of their hunters used the internet, 30% used the phone and 29% used a walk-in station.
- Will each method of electronic registration have the capability of registering more than one deer at a time?
Yes, options would be available to register a first deer/bear and when finished, the hunter would be prompted to register a second, third, etc. if applicable. Each transaction will begin with the Customer ID number, so multiple animals for multiple people could be completed.
- Is a hunter required to have the deer/bear with them when registering it by phone?
No. Hunters could leave their deer/bear hanging in camp, drive to town without it, and register it when they get to a phone, internet, or an in-person location. However, the hunter will need his/her hunting license. Once they get back to the deer/bear, they must write the registration confirmation number on the carcass tag to demonstrate proof of registration.
- What if hunters are at a deer camp and don't have cell service for several days?
All hunters will have until 5 p.m. the day after the animal is recovered and tagged to register it. This may be a change for some, but the convenience of registering a deer by phone should not make the inconvenience excessive for the majority of hunters.
- What will hunters be asked when registering a deer through this system?
The normal information of the customer ID number, deer/bear's sex, county/DMU, , date of kill, etc. will be required.
- What are we doing to help hunters know where they are hunting when they register over the phone?
Hunters should know where they are hunting before they go out. With fewer deer management units that now follow county boundaries in most cases, knowing where you are hunting should now be

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easier than ever. Hunters will need to know this in finer detail than ever before when purchasing antlerless tags. We will also be doing all we can to educate hunters this summer and fall on the zones, units, and regulations. If they don't know where they are before they go hunting, they will have a more difficult time determining this when they try to register a deer.

- Will the telephone registration system be robust enough to handle a large volume of people trying to register at one time?

Yes, the system will be capable of handling tens of thousands of calls each day.

Registration Confirmation

- Rather than a metal tag that used to be provided when a deer/bear was registered, how would a hunter confirm a harvested animal was registered with the new electronic registration system?

Once a deer/bear is registered using electronic registration, the hunter will be provided with a confirmation number that indicates that they have successfully completed the registration process. This number must be written on the carcass tag that is affixed to the deer/bear in order for it to be considered legally registered. Seeing this number written on the carcass tag fulfills the same function as seeing a metal tag attached to the deer.

- Is there a spot on the carcass tag specifically for writing the confirmation number down? Where would you recommend is the best spot to write the registration number down?

There is a blank space at the bottom of each carcass tag. It should be written here.

**Bonus Antlerless Deer
Carcass Tag**

Valid only in the following
**JEFFERSON COUNTY
SOUTHERN FARMLAND ZONE
PUBLIC LAND**

EXCEPTION TO VALID AREA: This tag is valid in any unit statewide for the following hunters:
1) Customers carrying a Class A or C disabled permit
2) Active duty military service member who are WI residents stationed outside WI or nonresident stationed in WI. Must be carrying a military ID and leave papers.
See Deer Management Unit Map in Regulations

Slit Month/Date/Time (AM/PM) of kill
and attach to Ear(or Antler)

TEST SMITH
WI CUST # 147-509-459 2014
Tran # 111112382 Expires: March 31, 2015

**Write registration
Confirmation number here**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

1 AM PM 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

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- What information does the confirmation number contain, if any?
The confirmation was shortened to a 9-digit number followed by one letter for a total of 10 characters. The numbers contain code that tells us the county where the animal was shot and the year it was shot.
- Will the hunter need to keep the registration tag, with the confirmation number written on it, like they used to with the metal tags?
Yes! Hunters will need to retain the tag with confirmation number until the meat has been consumed.
- Will the confirmation number that I write on my tag rub off?
No, it won't if you use a ball point pen or better yet a permanent marker. Do not use a "gel type" pen because they tend to smear. Pencils do not work well either.
- What if I call in to register my deer in the field, but at the end of the process I realize I do not have a pen/marker (or the pen/marker does not work) and I cannot write down my confirmation number? Is there a way to retrieve the confirmation number at a later time and date, when I would be able to write it down?
Contact the call center at **1-888-936-7463 between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm**. A customer service representative can retrieve the number for you. However, keep in mind that registration is not complete until the number is written on the tag.
- DATCP rules say venison brought to a meat processor needs a registration tag. Will this be modified?
The deer will still have a registration tag on it, but in no metal tag in 2015. Once the deer is registered, the carcass tag must have a registration confirmation number written on it. If not, it isn't considered registered. So a meat processor simply has to look at the carcass tag to see if it has the confirmation number written on it.
- Will there be alternative languages available for hunters who do not speak English as their first language?
We do not provide these services under our other phone-in registration systems. Like now, hunters are going to need to know someone who does speak their language and be able to help them register their animal. This does not seem to be a problem with turkeys, which are hunted by a large number of Hmong and Spanish-speaking hunters. Hunters may also call the DNR call center and be connected to a translation service for collection of the harvest information.

Registration Stations

- Would electronic registration allow anyone to be considered a registration station?
Yes. Any business could call itself a registration station if it is simply willing to provide a phone or computer with an internet connection to allow someone to register a deer or bear. The department will also list the names of participating businesses on the department website to help direct hunters to these businesses (businesses should notify the DNR of their intent to participate).
- Will a registration station that offers electronic registration options to hunters need to physically do anything with the new electronic registration system?

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Upon harvest, instead of filling out a deer/bear registration stub and attaching a metal tag, the station need only provide phone/internet to allow the hunter to complete the registration. The registration station also has the option of completing the electronic registration for the hunter. At the end of the process, the electronic registration system will then provide the hunter with the confirmation number.

- Will a list of deer donation sites for the county of harvest be provided?
It is not likely this could occur by phone because additional information would slow down the registration process, making it less convenient for hunters. However, this information will easily be provided on the internet or smart phone applications.
- How will electronic registration affect the Amish community?
Our intention is to make certain that enough in-person options are available to them. Many of the Amish turkey hunt and have registered their birds. If they wish to do it by phone rather than go to a station, they will need to know someone who can provide assistance. It would be a simple matter for them to ask a neighbor early if they can use the phone, or even have the neighbor call it in for them. We have been in contact with Amish leadership and have promised that if a community continues to have difficulty, the local manager or warden will help set up an in-person station specifically for them.

Data Collection

- Will there be requirements for hunters to assist with biological data collection while using electronic registration?
Yes. For bear hunters, the submission of a tooth is mandatory. Prior to the start of the bear season, hunters will receive a mailing with instructions and a tooth envelope. Deer hunters may also be required to submit samples if deemed necessary by the department. In 2015, all CWD sampling is voluntary.
- Will tissue sample or inspection requirements be enforced?
If submission of samples is required, such as a bear tooth or rib bone, it will be enforced just like any other rule. Some data collection will be strictly voluntary.
- Will the implementation of electronic registration still afford us the same quantity and quality of biological data that we were collecting with in-person registration stations?
According to our neighbors in Minnesota, registration data is as good as if not better than it was before implementing electronic registration. They believe their compliance is as high as ever, their data may actually be more accurate, they no longer have concerns about paper stubs getting lost and they have instant access to data. Rather than waiting months for registration information to be hand-entered, harvest information is available daily.
- How do we verify that the data collected through electronic registration (such as sex and relative age) is accurate?
We have experience in doing this already through our current telephone registration systems for geese, turkeys, and other species. For compliance, department staff will have the ability to pull random registrations on any given day and pay the hunter a visit. This can also be used to determine who registered deer/bear, if someone else registered it for them, etc. We will also be able to use this method and others to verify and estimate error rates for the actual information provided by the hunter.

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For example, are all fawns being registered as fawns, or is there a percent registered as an adult doe, and so on.

- Will we still be collecting additional information regarding hunting conditions, hunter satisfaction, etc.?

Electronic registration provides us with the ability to conduct all sorts of surveys if needed, and ask any questions for which we wish to know answers. However, we also want to be cognizant of the fact that hunters will use the phone especially because it's quick and easy. We don't want to over-use any one system asking so many questions that it becomes an annoyance that would turn hunters off to its use.

- How quickly will the electronic system be able to provide current harvest information to interested parties?

Daily.

- With the implementation of electronic registration, will there still be a means for hunters to have their deer sampled for CWD?

Yes. CWD sampling for hunter harvested deer will continue to be available. We may continue to have DNR-operated sampling stations as well as contract with private businesses to conduct CWD sampling. The majority of the DNR stations are located in the Southern Farmland Zone with additional sampling options in central and northwest Wisconsin. Hunters should check the DNR webpage (keyword "CWD sampling") to learn more about CWD sampling locations in their area.

- Will the use of electronic registration allow people to record more exact harvest location information?

Electronic registration allows us to ask for any information that we choose. However, there will be limits as to what is useful, and what hunters are able to provide. It would not be desirable to ask for overly complicated information that most hunters do not collect. Also keep in mind that deer and bear management do not require pinpoint harvest location information.

Enforcement

- If a warden checks my registered deer, how will they know it is a "real" confirmation number?

They can verify the confirmation number through their laptop computer or cell phone app.

- What would prevent someone from just sitting at the computer and registering a hundred "fake" deer/bear?

Each electronic registration transaction will require a Customer ID number. By entering this unique number in addition to the required harvest information, the department can track all deer and bear registrations by customer and investigate potential problems. Thus, fraud is easily identifiable.

- Will the implementation of electronic registration encourage an increase in poaching?

There may be some who try to abuse electronic registration by providing inaccurate information about the deer/bear they harvested, but the registration method is not the cause of a violation. E-registration provides the department the ability to investigate abuses much more promptly because the information is so readily available. Instead of waiting for weeks after the season when much of the evidence or the deer/bear itself is gone, department staff will have the luxury of accessing information

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quickly to investigate violations. However, it must be used as just one tool that helps law enforcement staff conduct their business.

- With electronic registration, how will hunters show proof of registration of their processed game? Will that requirement still apply?
Instead of a metal tag, hunters will show their carcass tag with the registration confirmation number written on it. The “confirmed” carcass tag now simply takes the place of the old metal registration tag.
- Will we seize deer/bear from hunters that are found to be not in compliance with registration?
Our reasons, discretion, and authority for seizure of carcasses will not change just because of a new registration system. State law requires seizure of animals illegally possessed. As always, wardens will work with the public to educate them and help them comply with the laws. It will also depend on the circumstances of each situation.
- Will there be an easy system for wardens to access information on who registered deer/bear?
Yes. Harvest information and individual registration information about specific hunters and their deer/bear are much more readily available than ever before. This information can be made available almost instantaneously.